

**SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST IN KIERA CASS'S  
*THE SELECTION* SERIES (2012): SOCIOLOGICAL  
ANALYSIS**



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**ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan: untuk menemukan indikator yang kuat yang bertahan dalam novel seri *The Selection*, menemukan gambaran yang kuat yang bertahan dalam novel *The Selection series* dan menemukan alasan Kiera Cass mengangkat isu yang terkuat yang bertahan dalam novel seri *The Selection*. Penelitian ini bersifat kualitatif dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif. Penelitian ini dianalisis menggunakan teori sosiologi sastra. Analisis tersebut digunakan untuk; mendeskripsikan serta menganalisis gambaran dan indikator yang terkuat yang bertahan dalam novel seri *The Selection* serta menemukan alasan mengapa Kiera Cass mengangkat isu yang terkuat yang bertahan. Berdasarkan hasil analisis data, penemuan dari penelitian ini adalah; (1) yang terkuat yang bertahan terjadi dalam novel seri *The Selection* dengan 3 fase; fase awal, fase ke dua dan fase terakhir (2) yang terkuat yang bertahan digambarkan melalui karakter, setting, event dan gaya penulisan (3) Kiera Cass mengangkat isu yang terkuat yang bertahan karena terinspirasi dari cerita Esther pada masa kecilnya serta kompetisi kecantikan pada saat ini.

**Kata kunci:** yang terkuat yang bertahan, *The Selection*, teori Sosiologi sastra, novel seri

**ABSTRACT**

This research aims at: finding out the indicator of survival of the fittest in *The Selection*, the depiction survival of the fittest in *The Selection* and the reason Kiera Cass's concern in the survival of the fittest. The qualitative research is carried out by making use of the descriptive method. This research analyzed by using sociology of literature. The analysis is used for: describing the indicator survival of the fittest on *The Selection series*; analyzing the depiction survival of the fittest and the reason of Kiera Cass's concern on survival of the fittest. Based on the result data analysis, the research findings are: (1) Survival of the Fittest happens in *The Selection* through three phase; initial phase, second phase and third phase. (2) Survival of the fittest depicted through characters, setting, event, and style. (3) Kiera Cass give concern on survival of the fittest because the competition on story of Esther and beauty competition that widely held inspire her.

**Keywords:** survival of the fittest, *The Selection series*, sociological theory, novel series

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

*The Selection series* is a modern novel that released between 2012 until 2014. This novel series is never been analyzed before until Februari 15, 2018.

Then the researcher takes the data from the formal object that discuss about survival of the fittest from the previous researchers as follows: the first is analyzing some crucial the idea's source of survival of the fittest in nineteenth-century (Gregory Claeys, 2000). The second is analyzing about bullying behaviors in adolescence via the lens EPT. And the last, David argue that survival of the fittest plays an important role in biological explanation and discovery (David B. Resnik 1988). All the previous study above explain survival of the fittest in the biological field and social field. But the researcher interest to analyze survival of the fittest beyond the biological studies and takes the issue of survival of the fittest in a literary work. Then this study conducts survival of the fittest as the issue in *The Selection series* novel and analyzed by using sociology of literature theory. It aimed to describe how the issue survival of the fittest depicted in *The Selection series*.

Based on Laurenson and Swingewood opinion, 1972, p.14, Sociology of literature is basically aimed to analyze literature work in terms of the author's social status, the availability of markets, the stipulation of type's publication, and the structure of the leaders. Concerning the variety of approaches to literary works, Wellek and Warren (1956: 84, 1990: 111) classify sociological studies into three, they are sociology of the author, sociology of literary works and the sociology of literature that concerns the reader and the social impact of literary works. And this research is suitable to analyze with the type sociology of the author and sociology of literary works.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study is a descriptive qualitative research. There are two object in this research, the first is discussing issue survival of the fittest by using sociological theory and the second is *The Selection series* by Kiera Cass that published by Harperteen in 2012 until 2014. Type of the data of this research consists of primary and secondary data. The primary data derive from the texts of the novel *The Selection series*, focusing on survival of the fittest in the beauty competition to be a princess of Illea. The secondary data covers some

data that support the analysis. It can be criticism of *The Selection* novel series, Journals of the novel and previous research about survival of the fittest. In the technique of analyzing data, the researcher use following steps: (1) reading the novel, (2) sorting the text that related to survival of the fittest, (3) describing the novel using sociological of literature that focus on survival of the fittest issue in *the Selection* novel written by Kiera Cass, (4) the text and important parts that related to survival of the fittest will be analyzed in detail with sociological approach, (5) and the last, drawing the conclusion based on analysis. In analyzing data, the researcher uses qualitative data analysis.

### **3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1 Indicator of Survival of the Fittest in *The Selection***

In this novel there are many evidence that proof survival of the fittest in *The Selection* novel, there are three phase of *The Selection* that showed the indicator. The following are the indicator of survival of the fittest:

##### **3.1.1 Initial Phase**

First phase of the selection was completion between 35 women that selected to join the Selection with prince Maxon. There are some indicator of survival of the fittest in the initial phase. Firstly, all the single women in Illea have the same equality to join The Selection through the invitation and submitting form, then Royal family announced in television report. Secondly, private interview by Prince Maxon. And from that interview, 8 ladies are eliminated. Beside the formal situation of competition, Prince Maxon and Lady America establish cooperation in secret. And Prince Maxon promised to keep her, until the last possible moment. Prince Maxon will never make her out from The Selection until the moment that prince Maxon have to make her out of that Selection or until the moment that America Singer was ready.

The other indicator of survival of the fittest in first phase are discipline and challenge. Discipline means if they break the rules, they

must be eliminate. The rules covers many things, from the ethic, relationship among participant, relationship between participants and Prince or many more. From this phase, 3 ladies were sent home. And the challenge has been examine how far the participant will survive. Not only from the Prince, but from external factor too. In this phase of challenge, 4 ladies were sent home because of homesick and cannot stand with the rebellion that try to enter the palace.

### **3.1.2 Second Phase**

In the second phase of the Selection, Prince Maxon did a big elimination, and narrow the Selection into six, and called The Elite. Those six ladies that survive until The Elite phase were have powerful factors that make them survive. Marlee was a favorite with the society, and that cannot be denied. Celeste was a very powerful young woman, and comes from an excellent family. Natalie and Kriss were charming girls, booth very agreeable and favorite of some in royal family. Elise have relation in New Asia. It is something to take into consideration because Illea is trying to end the war. And America, she had a special relationship with prince Maxon. The Selection was not end here, the Royal Family held the Assessment that every lady of The Elite have to present the progress proposal for Illea's future.

While in this phase 2 ladies had to go home because of some factor. Marlee Tames was eliminated because she was found in intimate moment with the Royal Guard, and Elise was gone home in case her sister died caused by the rebels.

### **3.1.3 Third Phase**

To emphasize who was worth to be a princess, in the third phase there was an assessment named Convicting, where the participants have to present themselves to the law. They have to determine the punishment to the man who has committed to the law.

As Maxon's promise in the start, he would keep her until the last possible moment. Then he made all the participants out except



America and Kriss who became finalists of the Selection. But in the end, Lady America was chosen to be Princess because of Maxon's love and some factors which made her worth to be Princess.

### **3.2 Depiction of Survival of the Fittest in *The Selection*.**

Survival of the fittest in *The Selection* novel was depicted through characters, setting event and the style. And here the following explanations:

#### **3.2.1 Creating Characters Characteristic**

Some characters in this novel are showing how survival of the fittest issues in this novel are described. And the characters in this novel are divided into four, they are:

##### **3.2.1.1 Participating Characters**

Participating selection here those are the 35 selected girls from every province in Illea. All the participant have the different characteristic, and their characteristic affected their way to survive. Here are some character of participant that dominant in the novel.

The first character is America Singer, She was beauty, strong, brave, kind, caring and humane. America treats the lower caste equally and rejects to conform to social norms of the castes. She was became a favorite of Illea's citizens because of her honesty and also authenticity during the Selection.

The second is Marlee Tames, she was America's closest friend in the Selection. She was born as a four caste. She is kind, friendly, have a good nature and easy to be allied to other contestant. She becomes a favorite of Illea's citizens in first phase of the selection. America thought that Marlee will be a good Queen because of her faithfulness and her tenderness.

And the protagonist character is Celeste Newsome, she was one of the contestant of The Selection who born in Two caste.

She was beautiful but shifty, skilled manipulating people and just focused on getting Prince Maxon's heart and the throne.

Then, the last is Kriss Ambers. She was popular in public, she was well mannered and considerate. Kriss and America are friendly between each other and work together on project. She was smart and present an intelligent as well as carefully measures.

#### **3.2.1.2 Judging character**

Judging character is the character who has a role to make choice and to set the course of the Selection. He also decide who will be the princess of Illea. The one and only judge in the Selection is Prince Maxon. He was the 19 year-old prince of Illea, he is humble, kind, patient and compassionate. He treats all the contestant with respect and kindness.

#### **3.2.1.3 Ruling Characters**

Ruling characters are the characters who have the rule in the course of event. The ruling characters have the right to punish the Selected if they make mistakes. The ruling characters in this trilogy novel are both of king Clarkson and Prince Maxon. King Clarkson might be the boss around these part, he is smart discipline and seems like a capable ruler. But he lacks the emphatic to others

The other ruler was Maxon Shreave, he was fair and gave all the girl respect and chance to compete in the selection, even he had deeply love to America.

#### **3.2.1.4 Mentoring Character**

Mentoring character in this novel named Silvia, the one and only mentor who showed in whole novel. Mentoring character has a role as an adviser, a teacher, a facilitator and a coach to all of the participant of the Selection.

### **3.2.2 Creating Setting**

The setting of *The Selection* series was in Illea, a state that built after United States destroyed and loosed in World War III from China. Illea divided into 35 provinces which every contestant of The Selection came from, they are: Carolina, Honduragua, Hudson, Likely, Labrador, Kent, Bonita, Calgary, Columbia, Dakota, Denbeigh, Fennley, Dominica, Hansport, Waverly, Angeles, Atlin, Baffin, Paloma, Allens, Bankston, Belcourt, Clermont, Zuni, Yukon, Whites, Tammins, Sumner, Sota, St George, Panama, Sonage, Ottaro, Midston, and Lakedon. And Angeles as a capital city. The palace was in Angeles where the royal family and the other ruler were stay. Angeles was a symbol of authority, power and strength because governance was centered in there.

### **3.2.3 Creating Event**

Event is one of the most important part of the story, like wise in the novel *The Selection series*. Event in this novel helped us to imagine how the selection was held. The first event is seeking princess, Prince Maxon was comes to 19, and he would be following his father footsteps by holding The Selection to find a princess. Then, for all of girl of Illea who were qualified to follow the selection, she have to fill out the form. And then, it must be return to the local Province Service Office. And will be drawn randomly each province. The next step is Announcement of the selection was reported on Illea's Capital Report. And America Singer from the Five was became the one of the selected.

The next event, Kiera Cass wrote that there was rebellion in the palace. When the selection held on the palace, there are two times rebellions. The first time is when they were halfway through breakfast. And the second time occur at the night. When America was slept.

In the second book, there was a punishment for one of the Elite contestant Marlee Tames, she was found at night in an intimate moment with another man who was a trusted Royal Guard. Certainly it

was broken the vow of royalty to Prince Maxon and they must be punished in front of people.

The other event is a Report. It was a formal assessment for all the Elite like debate or discussing each contestant's progress for Illea's future. At the day of Report all of the Elite have to present their program. Not only the Report, but the Convicting day also kind of formal assessment. In the convicting day, it was a symbol of submission to the law of Illea, the contestant must present how they punish a crime.

And the last Event is rebellion on the determination day, Maxon would choose one of Kriss or America. Everything was packed, king and queen being focal point, all the ex-contestant of the selection were came. But, the condition became tense because of the rebels were attacked into the palace and makes all people trying to escape as fast as they could in their heels and suit.

### **3.3 Using Style**

#### **3.3.1 Diction**

Diction mean the choice and use of words and phrases in speech or writing. The diction has some kind, in the discussion bellow are kinds of diction which found in *The Selection novel*, such as special expression and speech term.

#### **3.3.2 Special Expression**

There are some special expression on *The Selection series* novel that will discuss in this part. Firstly is skinny, It was special expression to call a man who came into America's home because he was in charge of going over the official rules of the Selection. His appearance was described in *The Selection* chapter 6 on page 26.

*"He was incredibly skinny with greasy black hair that was smoothed back, and he kept sweating"*

Then, My Dear. It was the expression from prince Maxon to call all the Selected. Beside, Lady is also expression to call all the contestant, it was like a tittle for them. It because their castes increased to the Three.

### **3.3.3 Speech Term**

Speech term in this novel described the term that written in *The Selection series*. There are term for the contestant, term for the castes, and also term for two fortresses of the rebels. Firstly, the Elite. It is a term for all the contestant that succeed entered to the last six contestant. Previously it was said that The Elite would consist of ten ladies. But, because of other things and some problem the Prince narrow the Elite into six ladies.

Secondly, The Selected is a term for all thirty five contestant of the Selection, they must comply with the rules of the Selection. The Selected were consist of various castes and various provinces. Every of the selected was a representative of their province.

Thirdly the One, It is the highest caste in Illea that include royal family, and religious figure such as pastor. The One is a position of power and respect. Prince Maxon, King Clarkson, Queen Amberly and her family are part of this caste.

The next the Two, it is the caste that include politicians, police, military, fire man, guard and celebrities such like professional athlete, pop star, and model.

Then, there is the Three. It is the caste of investor, engineers, scientists, doctors, philosophers, teachers, architects, writers, and other educated professionals.

The next term is the Four, it is the name of the caste for businessmen, head chef, real estate agent, business owner, factory worker and farmers.

Afterwards, a Five which is the caste of America Singer is a caste for artist too, like The Two, but they paid in different

nominal. The five wage is not comparable with the Two. The five are include classical musicians, carvers, singers, dancers, photographers, and circus players.

Then, the Six. It is the caste of they are who work as a servant such as house keepers, and driver.

While the Seven is the caste which one step up from the eight. It is the caste for the laborers such as planters, construction workers, garbage collectors, and beggars.

And the lowest caste is the Eight which the caste for the homeless as drug addicts, mentally and physically ill people, and state traitors.

The other term is Northern Rebel. It is the term for the rebels from north of the palace, in Bellingham. They have symbol for their group that is eight stars that forming north stars.

The last term is Southern Rebel. It was a group of rebels that do not have any symbol, they have no part in the social network and they little bit mysterious.

#### **3.3.4 Imagery**

In this research, the researcher will describe the imagery of the rebels and some castes. There are eight castes and two rebels which have different characteristic, appearance etc. The first imagery is upper castes, The upper castes are who live as the Ones, the Twos, the Threes until the Four. The upper castes sometimes wear denim or khaki whenever they want to changed up their looks. But it always in the way that brings matter to a higher level. Everything they wear always turn into luxury.

The second is middle castes. Fives was belonging on the middle caste. The Fives mostly wear bland clothes, because the artists covers everything with clothes, the singers and dancers just really need to look special only for the show.

The next imagery is the lower caste that include the Sixes, Sevens, and Eights. Based how much they paid and their appearance. The Sixes and Sevens do not have any luxury dress, they usually wear denim or something steadythe Sevens dressed in dusty overall and muddy boots because of their outdoors job. The seven work outdoors so hard but paid not comparable with their job no matter how hard they work. And the last is the Eights. The Eight do not have home. They live in the street or wandering

Then, The northern rebels, they live in the rainy patch of Likely near Bellingham. They attack much more frequently, knocked out the guards, injured, and tied up but they never kill.

And the last, The Southern rebel, they attack much more lethal, they killed the guard and others. They come only twice a year. Their troops mostly men, they lean but strong and they did not have any symbol. They appear to want destroyed the monarchy.

### **3.3.5 Symbolism**

In *The Selection novel*, the researcher found some symbolisms, and every symbolism has the meanings. First symbol is Aspen's penny, when America sang, Aspen give her a penny to pay for her song. And America keep those pennies in a jar.

The next symbol is Lily. Lily here as a symbol of Carolina, America wearing a Lily flower in her hair as a symbol of her province. When America would go to Angles for the first time as the selected, she dressed herself in black pants, white shirt and a lily in her hair as her province flower.

While May's khakis was a symbol of the real life, go back to khakis means go back to the old life before she experienced the life of a princess. It was a sharp contrast with the life she was experienced on the castle when Halloween party.

Afterwards, Angeles was a symbol of Illea's power, it is the place where the castle was built, the place where the ruler of Illea

live. So the rebel was attack Angeles castle because it was a source of power and strength.

And the last, eight point star that formed North stars on Dad's signature was mean something. It was the same symbol with August's and Georgia's own symbol. This was how Northern rebel identified their own.

### **3.4 Reason of Kiera Cass Give Concern on Survival of the Fittest**

Kiera Cass confesses that *The Selection series* was inspired by story of Esther in the bible and a fairy tale Cinderella. The story of Ester was narrate that there is a king which made a huge party for his wife, but his wife did not come. The King was embarrassed in front of his friend. They all drunk and they said be like "just have beauty contest and get a new queen". And everyone said be like "it is a good idea", So Esther is maybe one of thousands of broads who's brought to the palace.

Beauty contest is not only happened on Esther's age but at the beginning of 21st century, beauty contest or beauty pageant contest have also been widely held. The beauty contest in this era is not only give the priority to the beauty, but also to the good behavior and to the intelligent. It was been the external inspiration to the author of *The Selection* that the most survive and struggled contestant of the selection or competition will be the selected.

### **3.5 Discussion**

Survival of the fittest becomes a current issues side by side with competition phenomena in 21<sup>st</sup> century such as beauty pageant, X Factor, American Idol, Miss Universe, Miss World etc. All those competition have some related issues with *The Selection Series*, and some selection stages are slightly resemble between the competition in this era and the novels. Based on sociological context survival of the fittest mean that the most adapted and the most wanted to survive is the fittest one. And each individual who want to develop in the better direction, should have



willingness to reach it. Like America Singer who always try her best to be a Prince's wife through the Selection.

All the analysis of this research is suitable with sociology of literature theory by Rene Wellek and Austin Warren. Rene Wellek and Austin Warren (1990) state that the sociology of literature that linked a literature to a particular situation, or with certain political, economic and social systems (p.110). Concerning the variety of approaches to literary works, Wellek and Warren (1956: 84, 1990: 111) classify sociological studies into three, they are: Sociology of the author, sociology of literary works, the sociology of literature that concerns the reader and the social impact of literary works

Based on analysis above, survival of the fittest is suitable to analyze with sociological theory focused on sociology of literary work. Actually that literary works cannot be separated from the social realities that exist in society.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the analysis on the previous chapter, there are three conclusions as the answer of the problem statement. Firstly, there are some indicator of survival of the fittest that depicted in *The Selection series* through three phase: Initial phase, second phase and the last third phase. The initial phase refers to equality for competition, private interview, cooperation, discipline, and challenges. The second phase refers to the Elite, discipline, formal assessment, and rebellion. The third phase refers to formal assessment, final, and the one.

Secondly, survival of the fittest depicted through characters, setting, event, and style. In characters there are four types of characters described in the novel such as participating characters, judging characters, ruling characters, and mentoring characters. In creating setting, found that Illea divided into 35 provinces and Angeles as a capital city. In creating event, found eight type of event they are seeking princess, submitting application

form, announcement, rebellion, punishment, the Report, convicting day, and the last rebellion on determination day. While in style that used by Kiera Cass they are diction, imagery and also symbolism.

Thirdly, Kiera Cass give concern on survival of the fittest because the competition on story of Esther and Also Cinderella in her childhood are inspire her. And at the same time the phenomena of beauty competition was widely held, it may give the influence to her novels.

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